

March 28, 2003

Federal Communications Commission  
Washington, District of Columbia 20554

RE: Proposed Rule 03-83

Dear Sirs:

I am writing today to comment on the above captioned item, specifically as it applies to "vanity" call signs for licensees in the Amateur Radio Service. Since the vanity call program began, it has been acknowledged that the vanity program imposes certain costs on the government, and that those wishing to obtain a vanity call sign should bear the burden of these costs. Neither the present fee of \$14.50 nor the proposed fee of \$16.30 is particularly burdensome on the individuals concerned, and the general regulatory scheme with respect to new applications is fair and reasonable.

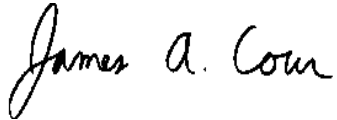
What is not fair and reasonable is the proposal to charge a fee for renewals of already issued vanity calls. It is the policy of the FCC to issue sequential call signs and renewals thereof free of charge. I submit that there is no difference in the administrative burden or cost to the FCC for routinely processing a renewal for an already issued license simply because the original grant was under the vanity system. Most licensees use the computerized ULS for routine administrative changes and renewals, so the only cost to the government for such transactions is postage to mail the new license. Accordingly, while it is fair and reasonable to recover the cost of administering the vanity program from new vanity applicants, once issued these licenses should be treated the same as any other in the Amateur Service.

If the FCC does not charge for renewal of a sequential license grant, there is no basis in equity to charge for renewal of a vanity grant. While 47 USC 159(a) permits the recovery of regulatory costs, it is not required to do so if such action is in the public interest 47 USC 159(d). I also note that the language at 159(g) imposing a fee on the vanity program is in conflict with the exemptions provided the Amateur Service at 159(h) which is not limited in scope to sequential call signs. Accordingly, the statute when read in its entirety supports a regulatory framework whereby applicants would bear the cost of administering the vanity program. Finally, I note that since the vanity program has not yet existed for ten years, the life of a call sign, no vanity call has ever been renewed. Thus, the applicants already cover the entire cost of the program.

At least some of the costs incurred in administering the vanity program are due entirely to the FCC procedures, and these costs could be mitigated by some simple changes. At present, fees collected for applications that are not approved are eligible for a refund. Since some highly desirable call signs are subject to an intense competition on the day they become available, some individuals submit numerous applications to improve their chances in the lottery knowing that they can recover the fees for any unsuccessful application(s). As each unsuccessful application requires the generation of a separate

refund check, this creates an unnecessary administrative burden on the system and increases the costs of administering the vanity program in general, raising the fees for all concerned. If the FCC wishes to continue the practice of multiple applications, then at least the commission should be entitled to retain the fees for duplicate applications as a means to defray the overall costs of the program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James A. Cour". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

James A. Cour